prosperity of the region during the last twelve years resulted in the benefit of the Sheiks who were quick to seize the meaning of the expansion in agriculture brought about by the introduction of the machines. They laid claim to vast areas of the best lands without opposition or control by the Government, and then rented these lands to machine owners, thereby getting rich at the expense of others and depriving the tribesmen of the possibility of tilling their own lands.

The concentration of land in the hands of the Sheik and his family is greatest in the Shammar tribe and in the Jubur whether though the Chiefs of the tribe own the best lands, but the Tay tribesmen took to agriculture earlier than either the Shammar or the Jubur and many Tay villages are owned by the peasants.

This short glimpse covers the Arab population of Jazirah, and we turn now to the other elements in the population.

II. The Kurds

The Kurds have been and are a vital element in the development of Jazirah. Their original country is the mountains north of the plain. Their language and customs have dominated the country so that even the city dwellers of Mardin and Nisibin speak Kurdish besides Arabic and Turkish. The Kurdish migration to Jazirah started in earnest after the failure of the Kurdish rebellion against the reforms of Mustafa Kamal. Some Kurdish tribal chiefs sentenced to death migrated with their tirbes to Syria. The French authorities welcomed them and they occupied the lands directly south of the border, greatly increasing in this way the number of Kurds already in the region. The Arab tribes saw their lands diminishing, but not being yet land conscious, they were satisfied to claim tribute from the Kurdish villages, which was paid for several years.

For the first time in perhaps nine hundred years, the French established law and order in Jazirah. The Kurds, farmers in their own country, began cultivating the plains. The land being fertile, the crops were good. The French authorities treated the Kurds well and the news of good crops and unbiased government treatment reached the Kurds just across the border. Migration became a continuous operation from the mountains to the villages of the plain. There were no obstacles to this movement either on the Turkish or the Syrian side, and the immigrants joined their cousins and relatives across the railway line. For this reason, and because a census was never taken, it is very difficult to estimate the number of Kurds in the Jazirah.

III The Shashans

The Shashans, a Circassian tribe around Ras el Ain, complete the rural population of Jazirah. They migrated to Syria during the Ottoman rule and settled as mercenary soldiers. They are not good at agriculture and their lands are not fertile and do not compare with those of the Kurds.

IV. The Christians

The cities and commercial centers of Jazirah are an extra-ordinary mixture of races and creeds, but they are perhaps more than 80% Christian. This is true of Kubur el Bid, Qamishli, Amunda, Dirbassiya and Hassakeh.

As in the case of the Kurds, the Turkish massacres of the Christians in Mardin and the mountainous country around it started their migration to Jazirah. The Christians reached Jazirah without property or capital with which to begin. They settled mostly in the towns mentioned. A few of them already owned lands, others were traders and had previous relations with the Bedouins and Kurdish tribes. In a relatively short time the towns grew and flourished. The Christinas prospered from commerce before the expansion of agriculture. The tariff differences between Syria and Turkey on such important commodities as sugar, tea, and coffee and the intermingling of the Kurdish population on both sides of the frontier, made the Jazirah towns ideal for an extensive smuggling business.

The town Christians also served as middlemen to the merchants of Aleppo, who provided the money to lend to the Bedouins and Kurds or to buy the sheep, cattle and crops. This work on a commission or partnership basis coupled with the smuggling business proved profitable to the merchants of Jazirah, so that during the last twenty years many of them have become wealthy and have come to own real estate and agricultural lands and machinery without, however, abandoning their commercial activities with the merchants of Aleppo. In fact, the general prosperity and development of Jazirah has increased its need for the credit of Aleppo.

This picture of the Christian population of Jazirah is not complete without mention of the Christian peasants who migrated from the mountain villages and settled in the country. Though Christian and living in villages 100% Christian, some of them are Kurdish in their language, dress and customs. Some other villages are populated

by Syriac Christians who speak Syriac and Arabic. A few villages are completely Armenian. Most of these villages are around Kubur el Bid and Qamishli. These Christian peasants are very devout. They are also conservative and always remember the injuries inflicted upon them in Turkey. There is hardly a Christian family in the towns or villages which did not lose a relative or a friend in the massacres. Therefore they are always on their guard against their Moslem neighbors and are always suspicious of the Government. Their bitterness is not likely to disappear for some time to come, and is a factor to be considered in the political development of Jazirah.

The Christians of Jazirah belong to all creeds and denominations. The largest community in numbers and in importance is the Syriac Orthodox, followed by the Armanian Orthodox. There are Chaldeans, Syriac Catholics, Armanian Catholics, Protestants, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, and Nestorians. It should be mentioned that what determines the origin and affiliation of a man in Jazirah is not his language or dress, but his Church. Thus a Kurd who speaks only the Kurdish language, who lives like a Kurd on the same standard of living, and who dresses like one, is yet an Armenian or a Chaldean or a Jacobite because he belongs to one of these Churches. His original language and customs have been lost by living for ages in a foreign environment. That is why one finds in Jazirah and the mountains beyond it the only Christian Kurds in the world. But in reality they are not Kurds. They are Armenians or Syriacs or Chaldeans who have adopted the Kurdish language and their true nationality can be known only by referring to their Churches.

A more recent concentration of Christians in Jazirah is constituted by the Assyrians around Tal Tamr on the Khabur. Following the massacre of the Assyrians in Iraq in 1933 and their expulsion from that country, the French in Syria gave them asylum, and the League of Nations appropriated funds to settle them along the Khabur. Lands were granted to them and villages were built in which motors and pumps were installed for irrigation. Nevertheless during these 19 years all the efforts appear to have been useless. The ten thousand Assyrians who migrated to Syria lead a wretched life. Their motors are not in a working condition, their crops are not abundant and they are now trying to sell their lands. The reasons for such a condition may be found in the fact that the Assyrians are not farmers and the lands given to them are of a poor quality.

During the French Mandate, the Christians of Jazirah, with the memory of the Turkish massacres still fresh, and considering all

of unusual disorder a considerable volume of trade was always carried along one or other of the roads.

This world trade has meant much to Syria. It has brought her wealth. It has given her inhabitants an occupation; until recently much of the trade not only passed through Syria but was handled in its passage by Syrian merchants. This has affected the nature of the Syrian towns, the caravan towns on the routes and the bazaar towns at the end of them. They have been cosmopolitan, the meeting-places of worlds, and their inhabitants have become quick-minded and flexible.

Trade has also affected the political history of Syria. Again and again powerful rulers in the neighbouring regions have stretched their hands over Syria, to tap the wealth of her cities and her routes. Often they have also desired to use her agricultural and forest resources. At other times it has been her strategic position which has tempted them; they have wanted to use her either as a defence-post against rivals or enemies in other neighbouring countries, or else as a bridge across which their armies could pass to attack those countries. The armies, like the caravans, have trodden immemorial paths. They have come sometimes up the Palestinian coast from Egypt; sometimes across the Euphrates from Mesopotamia or beyond; once, and most memorably, from Arabia; but most often from Asia Minor by way of gaps in the mountain barriers between Cilicia and northern Syria. Thus it has come about that for great parts of her history, Syria has been a province of an Empire larger than herself. On the whole, these have been the times of her greatest prosperity. Often she has been not only a part of an Empire or a world, but also its frontier.

Besides the movements of goods and armies, there has been a third movement, that of population. As a consequence of trade or war, or for other reasons, immigrants have flowed into Syria throughout history. There has been a trickle from Egypt and the Mediterranean countries, a larger stream from Anatolia, and occasional inrushes from central Asia; but above all there has been an uninterrupted flow from the Arabian peninsula. Not only individuals but whole tribes have come in. Nomads of Arabia have moved northwards and westwards, either because means of subsistence in the peninsula were insufficient or else under the attraction of plunder; from preying upon the cultivated land of Syria they have gradually

11: Hourani S-4 (no date) 1948 MD1 Syria 181

abandoned the wandering life, taken to agriculture and mingled with the settled population already established in the country, which was itself largely the product of a similar process at an earlier time.

The immigrants from the Arabian peninsula brought with them their distinctive customs and ideas and one or other of the 'Semitic' family of languages. Together with Mesopotamia on the other side of the Fertile Crescent, Syria has been throughout history the place where what may, by a not very misleading simplification, be called the 'Semitic' stream of population and influences has met and mingled with other streams. She has served also as the limit of the emigration from Arabia. The Semitic peoples and their languages have never taken firm root beyond the Taurus Mountains. Even in Syria they have not been unopposed, but they have always been of great importance. A large proportion of the population of Syria can trace its descent at least in part to earlier or later immigrants from Arabia; and while Mediterranean and other influences have largely affected forms of government and the culture of the cities, the language and the customs of the countryside have always been predominantly Semitic.

The two sets of influences, that from Arabia and that from other directions, have interacted in various ways. There has been conflict at times, and at times peaceful mingling. Often tension of some sort has existed between the more predominantly Mediterranean and the more predominantly Arabian elements in the population, and between successive waves of settlers from the same source. Sometimes that tension has mirrored itself in the individual soul, which has felt itself drawn in two directions, towards the desert and towards the West. It is only very rarely, if at all, that the influences have blended so completely as to remove all tension. It is true that there has always been a tendency to that end. Rulers and settlers from the Mediterranean lands have to some extent adopted Semitic ways and Arabian immigrants have acquired some of the characteristics of a Mediterranean people. But the process has never been allowed to complete itself; further invasions have occurred, a new Government has established itself, or there have been further waves of immigration, and the process of assimilation has had to begin again.

11: Hourani 3-4 (no date) 1946 MD1 Syria/MD/

life in all its aspects underwent a gradual and still incomplete process of Westernization. The tastes and habits of the population were profoundly influenced by the inflow of goods from the West; their beliefs and way of thinking still more profoundly so by the spread of Western culture.

The reception of Western civilization was helped by the emigration of many thousands of Syrians to other countries. In general they came more often from Lebanon than from other regions, and they were more often Christians than Moslems. Their motives for leaving their country were various. Many of the Christians desired to escape from a predominantly Moslem environment, especially after the events of 1860; many among both Christians and Moslems found Ottoman rule too oppressive to be borne; young men educated in the mission-schools wished for opportunities and rewards greater than their native land could offer; some were attracted by the legendary promise of the New World, its wealth and its freedom; and others went abroad simply because their relations and friends had already settled there.

There were two main roads of emigration. The one led to Egypt and the Sudan and, to a lesser extent, the other Arabic-speaking countries. This road had always been open, but it was rendered more attractive by the establishment of British control over Egypt and the Sudan. The British authorities needed subordinate officials who spoke Arabic and understood the ways of the Near East, but who were also acquainted with Western methods of thought and administration. They found what they needed in the graduates of the Syrian mission-schools, who for half a century loyally and effectively filled a variety of positions in the Governments of Egypt and the Sudan. Thousands of other Syrians went to Egypt as merchants, doctors and journalists. They progressed, and some among them played a considerable part in the cultural life of the country. Being largely an urban middle-class community, partly Christian and suspected of an excessive attachment to Great Britain or at least to the West, the Syrian-Egyptians have not always been liked by the Egyptians; but many of them have become Egyptians in nationality and sentiment, and at least the Moslems among them may become assimilated in a generation or two to the population among whom they are living.

The Syrian-Egyptians are numbered in tens of thousands,

but those who have followed the other road, to North and South America, to Australia and to other of the more distant parts of the world, must be counted in hundreds of thousands. The great majority of them started as retail traders on a small scale, but many took to wholesale trade and to the manufacture of textiles and other goods. The process of taking root was harder for them than for those who went to Egypt, since it involved learning new languages and acquiring new ways of life; but they have already been assimilated to a considerable extent, and the large Syrian colonies in the United States, Brazil and the Argentine, with smaller ones in other countries, have become prosperous, loyal and respected elements in the communities in which they are living. Most of them have given up all but a sentimental attachment to their country of origin, and there seems to be no obstacle to their ultimate complete assimilation, the more so since the flow of emigrants to the countries of the New World has greatly diminished during the last two decades. It has been partly diverted to British and French West Africa, much of the internal trade of which is now in Syrian hands.

The consequences of the emigration for Syria were both good and bad. They were bad in so far as it was the more talented and enterprising of the country's youth who went abroad, during the period of their greatest energy and often for ever. On the other hand, the level of prosperity was raised by the remittances which successful emigrants sent home to their relatives, and by the savings which they brought back with them. Also, they introduced new ideas, and, what was even more important, the example of a new and in many respects attractive way of life. These ideas, this example and the bare fact that Syrians were prosperous and happy in foreign lands, deeply influenced the attitude of Syria to the West. All this was especially true of Lebanon, since it supplied so large a proportion of the emigrants.

18

Western influences also came by way of education. Students began to go abroad, to seek the new learning in the schools of Europe and America; and Western schools became ever more numerous in the Near East. The greater number of them were established and maintained by foreign missionary institutions. Jesuit and other Catholic schools had existed since the

11: Hourani S-4 (no date) 1946 MD1 Syria MD1

production. A reform in the system of land-tenure would also help. In some parts of Lebanon small free-holdings are to be found, but in Syria large estates are the rule, and 'métayage' is perhaps the most common form of tenancy. The 'musha'' system of communal ownership, under which holdings are periodically re-distributed, is also widespread. In the past twenty years the Mandatory authorities have made progress with land-survey and the settlement of title, and with the division of lands held under the 'musha'' system. But greater tasks remain. Large tracts of the country are still in the possession of a small number of landowners, who for the most part are not interested in improving either the productivity of their lands or the standard of living of the workers. The creation of a free peasantry, by the break-up of the large estates and the appropriate use of the vast state-domains, is still in the future. The facilities for agricultural credit are very inadequate; there are practically no co-operatives and very few agricultural banks, and in consequence the peasant is in the clutches of the money-lender. The tax-system is regressive and weighs heavily upon the cultivator.

A special problem is created by the Beduin, of whom there are over half a million. Their economic function is the breeding of camels in the steppes and desert regions where agriculture is impossible. They are divided into tribes of which the most important are the various Anazah tribes—the Ruwala, the Feddan, and the Sba—in the steppe and desert south and west of the Euphrates, and the Shammar in the Jazirah. Traditionally contemptuous of the settled population and of all government, in the past they have been a serious obstacle to agriculture; but during the last two generations or so the Government has made a serious attempt to control their wanderings, and to prevent their raiding each other and the settled regions, while allowing them to preserve their tribal law and organization. At the same time their economic position is being undermined by the decline in the demand for camels. This makes it the easier to induce them to settle on the land. In the Jazirah, in the Hauran and elsewhere tribes can be found which are abandoning the wandering life. They take to breeding sheep as well as camels and become semi-sedentary; then they begin to cultivate the land and in time become wholly sedentary, thus continuing

11: Hourani S-4 (no date) 1946 MD1 Syria MOI

the standard of living and education among the Alawis and to develop their corporate consciousness; and who believe that if this is to be done the Alawis must be given a separate administration specially adapted to their needs and under benevolent foreign tutelage. There are others who admit the importance of these tasks but who emphasize that it is equally necessary to give the Alawis a consciousness of being part of the Arab nation as an alternative to sectarianism and to a paralysing localism. Among the Alawis themselves, one party adheres to the former school of thought, a second to the latter, but the greater number are suspicious of all interference from outside and wish only to be left alone.

Here, as in Jebel Druze, great social and intellectual processes are beginning of which the results have yet to appear. But it will probably take longer to bring Alawi society to a point where it becomes possible to face the problem of its definitive political status.

II

The problem of the Jazirah, the north-eastern province of Syria, is in many ways different from that of Jebel Druze and the Alawi territory. Before the War of 1914–1918 it was largely an empty district, except for Beduin tribes and some Kurdish villages. The land was sparsely cultivated where it was cultivated at all; life was insecure and government scarcely existed. When the French occupied Syria they established a considerable measure of public security, and this increased the attraction for settlers which the Jazirah already possessed by virtue of its fertility. The French authorities encouraged the settlement of members of Christian and other minorities who had been forced to leave their dwellings in Turkey, or who preferred not to live in the predominantly Moslem parts of Syria. In the last twenty years many thousands of Armenians, Jacobites and Syrian Catholics, together with Assyrians from Iraq after the events of 1933, have moved into the province; and even larger numbers of Kurdish Moslems, dislodged from their homes in Eastern Turkey by the policy of forcible assimilation adopted by the Turkish Government. The new towns of Hassetche and Qamishli and new villages have been created and new crops introduced, and the district has been opened up to regular commerce. The Beduin have been controlled AND CERTAIN TRIBES AMONG THEM PERSUADED TO SETTLE ON THE LAND.

Zu Wanner S-5 (no date) 1948 MI Middle East
Lebanon ME1
Syria MD1

crease the productivity per acre and also to expand the cultivated area per head.

In the Lebanon, however, with its steep hillsides under intensive cultivation, there is a definite pressure on land resources. The limits of intensification appear to have been reached, and a large part of the village population supplements its income by work in the towns, and by remittances from abroad. If the land tenure system in Syria were less oppressive, room might be found on the land for settlers from the Lebanon, but as things are, the standard of living and status of the Lebanese peasant is higher; compared with the Syrian peasant he is a free man, and there is no inducement to leave the Mountain for the underpopulated plains of central or northern Syria.

LAND TENURE

Corresponding to these different methods of farming, there are different systems of land tenure.[1] In Lebanon individual small ownership is well established, and the pattern of village life, with its broad class of small peasant owners, few large farmers, and a growing class of landless labourers, resembles that of Europe.

In Syria, the greater part of the land is owned by city notables—the ruling class—and cultivated by small share-tenants. Though individual ownership exists in some districts, for instance the Beqa Valley and the oasis of Damascus, the most usual form of landownership in the plain districts of Syria is share-tenancy. The villagers bring their corn to the village threshing floor, and when the grain is threshed the landlord or his agent stands by and takes one-half of the grain. Towards this result he has contributed nothing; all labour, equipment, seeds, livestock, have been supplied by the tenant, so that his share is rent purely for the use of the land. The landlord is almost always an absentee, a city notable who only visits the land to collect rent.

The share taken by the landlord varies from district to district, and also varies with the condition of the land. According to an inquiry made by the French authorities, the usual division of the crop for non-irrigated cereals is 40–50 per cent to the

[1] The information which follows is mainly based on A. Latron, *La Vie rurale en Syrie et au Liban* (Beirut, L'Institut Français de Damas, 1936). The brilliant and profound study by Jacques Weulersse, *Paysans de Syrie et du Proche-Orient*, is an indispensable authority which unfortunately was received only after going to press.

65:Landshut S-4 (no date)1950 M1 Middle East
Syria MD1

CHAPTER V

SYRIA

In Syria, where the idea of Arab independence found some of its earliest protagonists, nationalism has been marked by a special degree of ill-temper, perhaps because the masses of the larger towns—Damascus, Homs, Hama, Aleppo, etc.—at an early stage became an object of political manœuvring.

Anti-foreign feelings had been aroused as early as 1925, when clashes with the French Mandatory régime led to the bombardment of Damascus. After the Palestine Arab Revolt of 1936, Syria became a refuge for Palestinian Arab terrorists on the run. Fawzi Kaukji—an Albanian adventurer specialising in gun-running and gang warfare on behalf of Arab extremists—Amin al Husseini—the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem—and many other "wanted" disturbers of the peace found fertile soil for their activities in Syria.

Here the connection between Arab nationalism and Muslim fanaticism was particularly close, and even sermons in the Mosques frequently descended to the level of vicious and inflammatory diatribes against non-believers. As early as October, 1945, the leader of the "Young Muslims' Association," Sheikh Mustafa al-Sibaj, in a violent speech after the Friday midday prayers in the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, threatened the Jews in Arab countries with disaster "if the Palestine problem is not solved in favour of the Arabs."

These characteristics of Arab nationalism in Syria have had their effect not only on the Jews but on the Christian minority also. Hence the attractiveness of neighbouring Lebanon, with its security of life for minorities, as a goal for Christian emigration. The same was true as regards the Jews of Syria, a steady stream of whom has been moving to Lebanon for the last 25 years. The early trickle has recently become so great in volume that, by now, it is believed that only a few remnants of the Jewish population are left in the two big towns of Aleppo and Damascus.

The last census—that of 1943—gave the number of Jews in Syria as 29,770 out of a total population of 2,860,411 (of whom 2,424,817 were Muslims). The majority of the Jews used to live in Aleppo and Damascus, with about 17,000 in Aleppo (compared with 35,000 in 1910) and 11,000 in Damascus. The remainder, rather isolated, dwelt mostly in the north-eastern province of Jezirah, where they had settled in 1924, along with Armenians, Kurds, and Assyrians from Turkey and Iraq.

Of the 29,000 Jews in Syria in 1943, about 15,000 had left the country by 1947. At that time, there still remained about 10,000-11,000 in Aleppo and about 2,500-3,000 in Damascus. Less than 1,000

65:Landshut S-4 (no date)1950 M1 Middle East
Syria MDI

162 were left in the Jezirah district. An additional 5,000-6,000 Jews
167 emigrated at the beginning of 1948, leaving a total of about 9,000, with 4,500 in Aleppo, 4,000 in Damascus, and 500 in the Jezirah district. Further emigration took place that year; and it is estimated that there are now fewer than 6,000 left in the whole country.

This exodus was the culmination of many years of intimidation, material decline, and moral isolation. The smaller community in Damascus had always been poor. About 80 per cent earned their living as labourers and pedlars; approximately 15 per cent were able to maintain a slightly higher standard; while only 5 per cent were able to make a good living, mostly in commerce. The Aleppo community had in bygone days been prosperous and had been an active and important element of the city's once flourishing commerce. The rapid deterioration of conditions, however, made itself felt particularly strongly among the Jews of Aleppo; and since the wealthy were the first to leave the country, the remainder were impoverished even more swiftly.

197 Although knowledge of French is widespread among educated
563 Jews, the every-day language of the majority is either Arabic or Ladino. There are two *Alliance Israélite Universelle* schools, one in Aleppo and the other in Damascus. Since the convocation of the first Parliament in December, 1936, there has been one Jewish representative in the Chamber of Deputies. He was, it is true, allowed to retain his seat even when persecution of the Jews reached its height. But, isolated as he was in a sea of feverish hostility, there was little he could do to alleviate the situation.

In 1945, a meeting of Islamic religious leaders in Damascus, presided over by the Mufti of Damascus, sent a telegram to the Allied Governments, threatening that a Holy War against the Jews would be declared by all Islamic countries if Jewish immigration into Palestine continued. Within a month, this action and similar incitement from high quarters, coupled as they were with a violent anti-Jewish press campaign, bore fruit.

[579] On the Muslim holiday of Qurban Bairam, on November 18, an
563 infuriated mob, goaded on by a group of students, broke into the Great
668 Synagogue in Aleppo, smashed the candle burning in front of the Ark, battered some old Jews who were praying, and burnt the prayer books.

This was the signal for the outbreak of a general anti-Jewish campaign, made the worse by the incessant agitation carried on by nationalist orators among the Arab masses. There was the ugly murder of Jacques Franco, Assistant Headmaster of the *Alliance* School in Damascus. Suspicion that his death was the result of the prevailing unrest has never been entirely removed, even though there is insufficient evidence to prove it. There was the forcing of Rabbi Moshe Nahum, of the Jewish community of Jezirah, to make a statement protesting against Jewish immigration into Palestine. There was the humiliating spectacle of the heads of all three Jewish communities

65:Landshut S-4 (no date)1950 M1 Middle East
Syria MD1

14 smaller ones, and destroyed 150 houses. An unknown number of Jews was butchered to death.

By the time Palestine was invaded by the Arab States, the Jewish communities in Syria were completely isolated. No Jew dared to have any contacts abroad or, for that matter, with any foreigners resident in the country. Commercial activity came practically to a standstill, since Jews were forbidden to open their shops or to carry on with their employment.

The property of a transport company, owned by an Iraqi Jew, was confiscated, and the entire Jewish staff arrested. Fifteen Jewish girls who worked in the telephone exchanges in Aleppo and Damascus were dismissed. The Chief Engineer of Damascus, who had held this position for 12 years, suffered the same fate, together with five Jewish school teachers. The school building of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* in Damascus was requisitioned for the military. The already impoverished community was forced under threat to donate about £S10,000 (at that time equivalent to £1,100) to the Arab funds.

Throughout the months of fighting, a relentless campaign demanding the confiscation of all Jewish property went on. The Damascus Jews felt themselves fortunate in being spared a repetition of the earlier Aleppo riots, though in August, 1949, 11 were killed when a bomb was thrown into a synagogue.

For some time the situation of the Jews in Damascus was extremely grave. Being prevented from earning a living, the community was so impoverished that it was feared that many would die of hunger and disease. Had it not been for the assistance of the Jewish community in Beirut, the Damascus community might well have perished. Later, their straits were further relieved by American help.

With the overthrow of the Syrian Government by Husni Zaim in March, 1949, all restrictions on the movements of Jews, as well as on the sale of property, were abolished. The new ruler declared that he would deal severely with any person attempting to discriminate against the Jews. The lifting of the travel ban was immediately followed by a new wave of Jewish emigration to Lebanon.

The confused situation arising out of Zaim's murder, and the succession of political *coups* which followed, make the prospects of the Jewish community uncertain. But even if the new Government were to abstain from any official discrimination against the Jews of Syria, the atmosphere has been poisoned to such an extent that a return to normal conditions and peaceful relations seems most unlikely. On the face of it, nothing will alter the passionate wish of practically every Jew in Syria to shake the country's dust off his feet.

83:Simmons et al G-5 (1961-1961) 1964
MI Middle East
SYRIA MD1

POPULATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Population

163 The people of Syria are predominantly of
186 ancient Semitic stock, modified by centuries of conquest, and Arabic in culture, language and religion. The population, however, includes numerous minority groups, some of which exist as compact communities with distinctive customs and traditions. The official method of enumeration is on the basis
161 of religious affiliation. In 1949, the population was estimated at about 3,177,700, exclusive of undetermined numbers of Bedouin, representing less than 10 per cent
162 of the total. Approximately 86 per cent of
165 the inhabitants were adherents of Islam; about 69 per cent belonged to the Sunni sect. The heterodox sects consisted of roughly 355,500 Alawites, 100,600 Druzes, 32,800 Ismailites, 13,700 Shiites and 2,900 Yazides.

Syria, like Lebanon, has important indigenous Christian minorities, which together account for almost 14 per cent of the population. As of 1949, the Greek Orthodox Church claimed about 153,900 members; the Armenian Orthodox, 107,300; the Syrian Orthodox, 44,970; and the Greek Catholic, 51,500. Other church groups, comprising Armenian, Syrian and Roman Catholics, Maronites, Nestorians (Assyrians), Chaldeans and Protestants, each numbered from 5,000 to 18,000. In addition, there were slightly over 31,000 Jews, mainly of Sephardic origin and with a long history of residence in Syria. With the exception of about 125,300 Armenians and 10,200 Assyrians, the members of the Christian minorities are largely Arabic-speaking and closely re-
169 lated to their Moslem compatriots. Most of
162 the Armenians have come to Syria since 1894 as refugees from Turkish territory. The majority reside in the larger towns, particularly in Damascus and Aleppo, but considerable numbers have settled in the Al Jazira region. The Assyrians who fled to Syria from Iraq in 1933 and the Chaldeans

p. 137(B)

162 dwell in the Khabour river basin. The Syrian
169 Orthodox and Catholic churches flourish in the north, where the inhabitants of many
[191] mountain villages employ Syriac dialects, preserved since pre-Islamic times.

795 Prominent among the Moslem minorities are the Alawites and the Druzes. Although both are scattered throughout the country, they are found primarily in the provinces, which, under the Mandate, were semi-autonomous units of the Levant. The Alawites inhabit the province of Latakia, comprising the coastal plain and a large part of the Orontes river valley, where they represent about 70 per cent of the population. The Druzes form a closely knit religious community which migrated to the Jebel ed Druz highlands from Lebanon in the last century.

162 Several racial and linguistic minority groups are contained in the orthodox Moslem majority. About 200,000 Kurds reside in Syria, chiefly in Aleppo and Al Jazira provinces and in the city of Damascus. A large proportion have lived for generations on the fringes of Kurdistan, within the pres-
[167] ent boundaries of Syria. but some are recent colonists from eastern Turkey to the Al Jazira area, where they constitute a considerable part of the population. Smaller non-Arabic-speaking groups include about 30,000 Turkomans, settled around Aleppo and in the Orontes river valley, and almost 20,000 Circassians, found along the northern frontier and in the Euphrates river basin.

Over three quarters of the population live in the western and the northwestern provinces, with the greatest concentration in the coastal region, in the vicinity of Damascus and Aleppo, and in the Homs and the Hama areas. In the interior, the settled districts are limited to the river valleys, while the steppe and the desert country to the east and the south constitute
161 the home of nomadic Bedouin tribes. In 1948, the density of population in Latakia was estimated at 215 per square mile. In the province of Aleppo it was 113 per square mile; in the province of Damascus, 90 per

164 the Qoubour el Bid section of the Al Jazira, along branches of the Khabour River north-
126 east of Hasseiché. *Schistosoma haematobium*
124 is the only species identified in confirmed cases, but rectal complications are sometimes recorded. At present, the disease is confined to circumscribed foci, but in view of the irrigation and the agricultural potentialities of the region, its control is of
164 major public health significance. The foci
361 are apparently of recent origin. Whether the
167 infection was introduced by Senegalese
744 troops stationed in the vicinity, as claimed by the local inhabitants, or by nomadic tribes from Iraq is a matter of conjecture. Surveys have been made within recent years, under the auspices of the Ministry of Health and co-operating international organizations, and, although some discrepancies are evident in the determination of the infection rates in different villages, all emphasize the seriousness of the problem. Competent local authorities estimated in 1951 that the total incidence in that year approximated 12,000 cases.

659 In surveys undertaken in 1948,[84] the ex-
164 amination of urine samples collected from 545 persons in Qoubour el Bid and neighboring villages on the Gerahi branch of the Khabour River indicated general infection rates of about 62 per cent. They averaged 73 per cent among the men and the boys, and 49 per cent among the women and the girls. Moreover, they were consistently higher, in both sexes, in individuals under 20 years than in the older age groups.
[361] Equally high infection rates were found among the seminomadic peoples in the Tell Abiad area. A system of spot checking suggested probable infection rates of almost 100 per cent among males and of 60 per cent among females in 3 of the 5 villages visited.

164 A more exhaustive investigation in 1950[85]
659 revealed the presence of infection among
361 about 24 per cent of the inhabitants of 58 villages situated along 4 tributary streams in the Qoubour el Bid area. The infection rates ranged from 1 to 88 per cent: the most